



AUTOMOBILE WASHING

Automobile washing activities have the potential to contribute to storm drain pollutant loads because road dust washed from vehicles may contain metals and hydrocarbons. Any leaking fluids washed from the automobile may be carried to the storm drain by the wash water. Detergents used for automobile washing may contain phosphorus and foaming agents, which contribute to the eutrophication of receiving waterbodies.

Think before leaving anything in the storm drain. The ocean starts at your front door.

Designated BMPs

- Vehicles should be washed over pervious surfaces such as lawns and gravel areas where feasible.
- Excess wash water containing detergents should not be dumped into the storm drain. Excess wash water should be disposed of into the sanitary sewer (i.e. via sink, or toilet) or onto a pervious surface allowing complete infiltration.
- Avoid the use of “hose off” engine degreasers.
- When possible, use commercial wash facilities maintaining proper BMPs and water recycling.
- Avoid acid-based wheel cleaners.
- Shake floor mats into trashcan or vacuum to clean. Do not shake over ground.

Optional BMPs

- Choose soaps, cleaners, or detergents labeled “non-toxic”, “phosphate free”, or “biodegradable”. Vegetable and citrus-based products are typically safest for the environment.
- Turn off water when not actively washing down automobile.
- Establish neighborhood wash areas, where runoff is properly controlled and managed.
- Divert runoff from automobile washing to a grassy surface large enough to contain and allow complete infiltration.